



## Partnerships Across Connecticut

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### PURPOSE

Ensure public school students are taught material needed for success in college and that students and families are prepared to pursue and succeed in post-secondary education.

### SUMMARY

Require each Priority School District to partner with at least one community college, state university or participating private college. College or university and high school leadership and faculty work together to:

1. Evaluate and align curriculums and share definitions and competencies expected for college success.
2. Test students and evaluate results, junior year or sooner, to gauge and establish college readiness.

Communication between higher education and public schools is critical – but has no opportunity to occur in the current structure of each system. Requiring a partnership to discuss curriculum alignment and 11<sup>th</sup> grade test scores will create an ongoing opportunity and requirement for each system to consider the demands and requirements of the other.

Prior to adoption of the Common Core Standards in 2014, the state Department of Education should lead the process of curriculum development – otherwise, each district will have to do its own work, and outcomes are not guaranteed to be consistent. Higher Education must be involved in this process.

### KEY ELEMENTS

- Each public school district will select a partnering institution of higher education. They will enter into an agreement based on mutually agreed systems of defining success, selecting and interpreting test results, and reporting mechanisms.
- Coordination can be provided by Regional Education Service Centers.
- Oversight can be provided by the Board of Regents/P-20 Council and State Department of Education.

### FISCAL IMPACT

Can vary. Fifteen priority school districts, each partnering with a college or university. The proposal could be implemented at no cost, if needed, by requiring meetings and alignment. To create incentives for higher education, 15 grants of \$20,000 each would cost \$300,000.

### BACKGROUND

Employers and educators agree that the “developmental education crisis” threatens to cripple our economy if not addressed. Consider:

- 70% of community college students require remedial education to enroll in college-level courses – and 94% of those have earned their high school diploma at a Connecticut high school.
- The vast majority of jobs now require at least some education beyond high school – yet just 41% of high school graduates from 2004, the first year studied, have any postsecondary credential.
- 500,000 adults in our state lack the basic educational skills to get a job.
- Businesses have a near-universal lack of trust in a high school diploma to indicate an applicant can be trained and perform on the job. They are increasingly turning to independent credentialing programs to gauge job-readiness.

This proposal brings to scale elements of successful pilots that changed the public school climate and significantly reduced the need for remediation among high school graduates. This connection between K-12 and higher education, combined with rigorous and ongoing evaluation of data, is key – both on its own merits, and to the success of other school reforms.

*CAHS advocates for policies that will end poverty in Connecticut and help all children and families achieve economic success.*

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